

XX *Mrs J.S. Lowell

2 Ap. 1904

PLEASE RETURN THIS, WHEN FILLED, TO MRS.
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TO THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

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THE undersigned citizens of the United States, deeply anxious that peace may be restored in the Philippine Islands, and that a contest professedly waged in the interest of humanity may not be degraded into a inhuman war of extermination, would lay before you the following statement and petition:

In his first annual message to Congress the late President McKinley said:

"The cruel policy of concentration was initiated [in Cuba] February 16, 1896. The productive districts controlled by the Spanish armies were depopulated. The agricultural inhabitants were herded in and about the garrison towns, their lands laid waste, and their dwellings destroyed. This policy the late cabinet of Spain justified as a necessary measure of war and as a means of cutting off supplies from the insurgents. It has utterly failed as a war measure. It was not civilized warfare. It was extermination.

"Against this abuse of the right of war I have felt constrained on repeated occasions to enter the firm and earnest protest of this Government."

In his special message preceding the declaration of war against Spain in April, 1898, the President spoke yet more strongly, saying:

"The efforts of Spain were increased both by the dispatch of fresh levies to Cuba and by the addition to the horrors of the strife of a new and inhuman phase happily unprecedented in the modern history of civilized Christian peoples. The policy of devastation and concentration inaugurated by the Captain-General's *bando* of October 21, 1896, in the province of Pinar del Rio: was thence extended to embrace all of the island to which the power of the Spanish arms was able to reach by occupation or by military operations. The peasantry, including all dwelling in the open agricultural interior, were driven into the garrison towns or isolated places held by the troops.

"The agricultural population, to the estimated number of 300,000 or more, was herded within the towns and their immediate vicinage, deprived of the means of

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support, rendered destitute of shelter, left poorly clad, and exposed to the most unsanitary conditions. . . . Reconcentration, adopted avowedly as a war measure in order to cut off the resources of the insurgents, worked its predestined result. As I said in my message of last December, it was not civilized warfare; it was extermination. The only peace it could beget was that of the wilderness and the grave."

Under conditions not differing from those which confronted Spain, and for the very reasons which in her case we held insufficient, the Government of the United States seems to have adopted the same policy.

In the "Manila News," an American paper published in Manila, which cordially supports the course which it chronicles, appeared the following statement on November 4th last.

"The transport 'Lawton' returned yesterday afternoon from a two-weeks cruise, touching at Catbalogan, Cebu, Perang-Perang and Davao. On her outward passage she took two hundred Ilocano scouts for the Samar service.

"On the arrival of the 'Lawton' at Catbalogan, Brigadier-General Smith had been in Samar about ten days, and his strong policy was already making itself felt. He had already ordered all natives to present themselves in certain of the coast towns, saying that those who were found outside would be shot and no questions asked. The time limit had expired when the 'Lawton' reached Catbalogan, and General Smith was as good as his word. His policy of reconcentration is said to be the most effective thing of the kind ever seen in these islands, under any flag. All suspects, including Spaniards and half-breeds, were rounded up in big stockades and kept under guard. Among these were numerous presidentes of some towns on the western coast of Samar, who assisted in smuggling rill to the insurgents. A number of these rascals were gathered in and made to give up the proceeds of their traffic, amounting to thousands of dollars, which were confiscated."

Samar, according to the American Encyclopedia in 1881, had a population of over 250,000 persons and an area of over 5,000 square miles. These figures enable us to understand what General Smith's orders meant.

The "Philadelphia Public Ledger," one of the oldest and most respected newspapers in Philadelphia, is in political sympathy with the administration. In a recent letter to that journal from its correspondent in Manila, who is evidently not a hostile critic, occurs the follow-

ing passage : "The present war is no bloodless, fake, opera bouffe engagement : our men have been relentless, have killed to exterminate men, women, children, prisoners and captives, active insurgents and suspected people from lads of ten up, an idea prevailing that the Filipino as such was little better than a dog, a noisome reptile in some instances, whose best disposition was the rubbish heap. Our soldiers have pumped salt water into men to 'make them talk,' have taken prisoners, people who held up their hands and peacefully surrendered and an hour later without an atom of evidence to show that they were even insurgents stood them on a bridge and shot them down one by one, to drop into the water below and float down, as examples to those who found their bullet-loaded corpses.

"It is not civilized warfare; but we are not dealing with a civilized people. The only thing they know and fear is force, violence, and brutality, and we give it to them.

"The new military plan of settling the trouble by setting them at each other is one that looks promising. We have now sent a thousand Maccabees to Samar to avenge the treacherous murder of Co. C of the 9th Infantry. They are hereditary enemies of the 'Ladrones' and go forth to the slaughter gayly."

Statements like this constantly recur in private communications from the islands and in the letters of newspaper correspondents. They find a ghastly confirmation in the official reports of Filipino losses, in which the killed many times exceed the wounded; and they are not contradicted. If any official attempt has been made to prevent these cruelties or punish their authors it has not been made known to us. If these charges are not true, the honor of the country requires that their falsity should be proved.

The Filipinos have asked us again and again to hear them—have begged that some of their leaders might be allowed to visit the United States and here in person state their position. This humble position has been denied. We strike, but will not hear. Again the words of President McKinley in his message of April, 1898, about Cuba seem pertinent :

"My predecessor made an effort to bring about a peace through the mediation of this government in any way that might tend to an honorable adjustment of the contest between Spain and her revolted colony on the basis of some effective scheme of self government for Cuba under the flag and sovereignty of Spain. It failed

through the refusal of the Spanish government then in power to consider any form of mediation or indeed any plan of settlement which did not begin with the actual submission of the insurgents to the mother country, and then only on such terms as Spain herself might see fit to grant."

Does not this state our position to-day? Do we not insist on unconditional submission and propose for the Philippines such form of government as we ourselves "see fit to grant"?

Men differ as to whether this country should pursue the attempt to conquer these islands or should leave their people to govern themselves, and upon this point we say nothing now; but there should be no room for difference among civilized men as to the use of torture and other inhuman methods of waging war.

Every American citizen must be glad to believe that his country's purposes are benevolent and that his fellow countrymen mean to give the unhappy people of the Philippine Islands civilization and good government, but our present methods seem ill-adapted to secure the only foundation on which any good government can rest, the contented acquiescence of the governed. Until we can win the confidence of the Filipinos—can satisfy them that we mean them nothing but good—our professions of benevolence fall upon ears as deaf to our words as ours are to their entreaties.

While human nature remains unchanged, cruelty begets cruelty and hate, kindness and sympathy inspire affection. Our policy in the Philippines may exterminate the natives; but every day that it continues it plants fresh seeds of undying hostility, breeds wrath and suspicion on both sides, and makes the task of dealing justly with this weaker people more and more difficult. The more we learn to despise and distrust the Filipinos the more we become unfit to rule them. A teacher or a ruler must believe in his pupils or his subjects in order to teach or rule successfully. Is it not time to change our course? It is not for the United States to imitate the practices, the policy, the stubborn attitude which we condemned as barbarous and inhuman when they were adopted by Spain. It was for these things that we took her colonies from her.

We respectfully petition

First.—That an investigation be made in regard to the practices of our army in the Philippine Islands by a committee of the Senate, and that the exact truth be laid before the people of the United States.

Second.—That, if these reports are true, steps be taken at once to stop reconcentration, the killing of prisoners, the shooting without trial of suspected persons, the use of torture, the employment of savage allies, the wanton destruction of private property, and every other barbarous method of waging war, which this nation from its infancy has ever condemned.

Third.—That appropriate steps be taken at once, by treating with the representatives of the Filipinos in arms, to secure a suspension of hostilities in order that an opportunity be given for a discussion of the situation between the Government and the Filipino leaders, who should be permitted to visit this country for this purpose.

Fourth.—That pending the negotiations, strict orders be given to the officers in command of our troops to deal with the inhabitants of the Philippine Islands as with persons whom one day we hope to make our friends.

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